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Metaphors that seized the COVID-19 discussion

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot has changed in the ways we as humans function and act in our daily lives. With the whole world trying to do social isolation (forcibly or willingly) to prevent themselves from the fatal impact of the virus, leaders, writers, linguists, language enthusiasts and many people all over the world have come up with novel characterisation of the deadly pandemic. These realizations of the linguistic ability have come to become part of the standard language so quickly that it appears to be a thing of seconds ago.

Different characterizations of the pandemic can hide or highlight its certain features and also sometimes motivated by agenda as in the case of political leaders. In the following points, I present some of the dominant and impactful Metaphors that have been and are used to talk about the COVID-10 pandemic.

- In India itself, some metaphors came along with the pandemic and their usage is quite politically motivated in many cases. Some members of the 'Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha' called COVID-19 as '**Meat Eater's**'[1] disease. They went on to cross the limit of reason by proclaiming that 'Cow Urine' is a magical liquid that has the power to treat COVID-19.
- Bloggers and journalists have extensively used '**Domino Effect**' [2] to describe the COVID pandemic. People refer to this metaphor when they talk about the chain of events that the pandemic has resulted in affecting the overall world trade relations and economy. Basically, they talk about how one single event of pandemic resulted in a huge chain of events affecting worldwide community.
- '**War**'[3] metaphors have become quite common since the advent of the pandemic, particularly from the mouths of Political leaders, let it be from U.S president *Donald Trump* describing him as war time president, New York Governor *Andrew Mark Cuomo* extensively referring to War in his press conference or Italian PM *Giuseppe Conte* referring to *Churchill*. War metaphors mainly aim to emphasize on the agenda that how well a country's Government is fighting an invisible enemy as a war.
- '**Flood and Tsunami**'[4] metaphors have also become common among readers of digital media as they see writers and journalists capturing the essence of pandemic using terms like 'the perfect storm', 'tsunami of cases', 'second wave' etc. These disaster related metaphors characterise COVID-19 in terms of the tsunami of causes

that lead to outbreak, flood spread of positive cases, disaster like impact of the pandemic etc.

- An interesting but mockable metaphor came from Pakistan where the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives *Mr. Asad Umar* compared the COVID-19 pandemic with the number of **Road Accidents**[5] happening in the country every month. He went on to defend the steps taken by PTI Government in the country's legislature by saying "Around 4,000 people die in road accidents in the country every month, but we still allow cars on roads, because their necessity is greater than the danger of those accidents."
- '**Gray Rhino**'[4] though not common but an interesting metaphor was introduced by risk expert *Michele Wucker* to describe highly obvious, highly probable, but still neglected' dangers, as opposed to unforeseeable or highly improbable risks.
- Shia leader in Iraq *Hadi Al-Modarresi* went on to call COVID-19 as '**Allah's punishment to China**'[6]. Later he was himself found positive for the disease in a turn of events.

References

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- [5] (2020, March 4) Minister Asad Umar Compares COVID-19 To Road Accidents. [Naya Daur](#)
- [6] Archana, KC (2020, March 14) Islamic Scholar Says Coronavirus Is 'Allah's Punishment', Ends Up Testing Positive For COVID-19. [India Times](#)